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Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields**

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains resolutions and decisions adopted at the twenty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012 and at the sixty-eighth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok from 17 to 23 May 2012. Full texts of the resolutions are available from: www.un.org/regionalcommissions/sessions.html.

* E/2012/100.

** The present report was submitted late in order to include information on the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its sixty-eighth session, held in May 2012.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Council

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

1. At its twenty-seventh session, held in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) adopted resolution 302 (XXVII), based on which the following resolution is submitted for action by the Council:

Requests from the Republic of Tunisia, Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting resolution 302 (XXVII) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia concerning the requests received from the Republic of Tunisia, Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco for admission as members of that Commission,

Noting also the requests received from Tunisia, Libya and Morocco for admission as members of the Commission,

1. *Approves* the admission of the Republic of Tunisia, Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco as members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Commission to take the necessary measures for the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex
Resolution 302 (XXVII)
Request from the Republic of Tunisia, Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting that the Republic of Tunisia, Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco have consistently participated, in the capacity of observers and through representatives, in all sessions of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia since 2005 and in meetings and activities of the Commission,

Noting also that such participation has enhanced cooperation and strengthened the relationship between Tunisia, Libya and Morocco and the secretariat of the Commission and member countries,

Taking note of the request of Libya, presented on 7 May 2012 and the request of Morocco, presented on 8 May 2012, to become members of the Commission,

Taking note also of the letters dated 7 February 2012 and 2 March 2012 addressed to the secretariat by the Embassy of Tunisia in Beirut, affirming the desire of Tunisia to increase cooperation with the Commission and its member countries, and requesting to become a member of the Commission,

Referring to paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, on the establishment of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, which stipulated that the members of the Commission should consist of the States Members of the United Nations situated in Western Asia which called on the

services of the then United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut, and that future applications for membership by Member States should be decided on by the Council upon the recommendation of the Commission,

Recalling that the terms of reference of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, as stipulated in Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV), do not limit the geographical location of countries that may become members thereof nor proscribe a member of one regional commission from being at the same time a member of another regional commission,

Noting that most of the other regional commissions have member countries that are not located in the region that they serve,

Noting also that both Egypt and the Sudan are dual members of Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic Commission for Africa,

1. *Welcomes* the requests made by Tunisia, Libya and Morocco to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to submit a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council that those requests be approved;

3. *Also requests* the secretariat to invite all other Arab countries to become members of the Commission and to coordinate with the relevant United Nations entities and the League of Arab States to redesignate the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Arab Region.

7th plenary meeting
10 May 2012

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

A. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

2. At its twenty-seventh session, held in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012, the Commission adopted a number of resolutions, which are herein under brought to the attention of the Council.

Towards enhancing the macroeconomic policy in member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (resolution 303 (XXVII))

3. The Commission recognized that inadequate macroeconomic policies have adverse effects on regional, national and human development and prevent the countries of the region from realizing their full development potential, that macroeconomic policy decisions have significant impact beyond national borders and affect regional integration initiatives, and that innovative solutions would be needed to improve the performance, structure, behaviour and decision-making framework of the existing macroeconomic policy in order to benefit all people in the region. Conscious of the need to create an environment conducive to sharing knowledge, expertise and best practice related to effective macroeconomic policy frameworks and their implementation, the Commission requested the secretariat to form an expert group to discuss macroeconomic policies in the region, facilitate the

exchange of good practice between countries, provide assistance and specialized training and advisory services in the economic field, and to disseminate information and coordinate regional multi-stakeholder meetings.

The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development (resolution 304 (XXVII))

4. The Commission took note of the recommendation made by the Committee on Social Development at its eighth session, regarding the need to enhance the capacity of member countries to design and implement social policies and institutional mechanisms to achieve equal and inclusive social development, and reaffirmed the contribution that could be made by the Commission towards the sharing of information on good policies and practice for mainstreaming social inclusion into social and economic policies at the national, regional and international levels aimed at achieving equity, equality and social protection and cohesion.

5. It called upon member countries of the Commission to explore the possibility of expanding contributory social security systems to cover all social groups; encourage the representation and participation of youth, women and all social groups in all bodies responsible for shaping public policy at the local and national levels; strengthen participatory dialogue and social partnerships, ensure free and fair elections and implement, monitor and assess the implementation of the international human rights instruments and social development initiatives; intensify their efforts to mainstream social justice and the concerns of all social groups into sustainable development strategies; and enhance transparency and accountability in the provision of social services.

6. The Commission requested the secretariat to assist member countries in developing employment strategies that are integrated with economic, education and social protection policies; strengthen the capacity of member countries to mainstream the concerns of older persons, youth and persons with disabilities into national development plans; assist member countries in strengthening participatory social dialogue and building public, private and civic partnerships aimed at enhancing the delivery and accessibility of social services; and strengthen cooperation with member countries in the collection of data on all social groups, disseminate good practice and exchange experience in designing policies and programmes aimed at promoting social inclusion and providing equal opportunities in all aspects of life.

Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 305 (XXVII))

7. The Commission referred to the outcome of the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Cairo, on 16 and 17 October 2011, in cooperation with the League of Arab States, the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia and the Commission, and expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat of the Commission in analysing, monitoring and following up sustainable development issues, carrying out a significant role in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and involving stakeholders and different sectors in identifying the priorities and challenges in the Arab region. It

called upon member countries to adopt the Arab Declaration issued by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment on 19 April 2012, as a reference for the negotiations concerning the outcome document of the Conference and to take an active part in the preparatory meetings for the Conference. It urged member countries to review policies, strategies, national frameworks and institutional frameworks with a view to making them more responsive to the demands of sustainable development.

8. The Commission requested the secretariat to submit a report on the outcomes of the Conference and to continue to coordinate and cooperate with Arab Governments, United Nations organizations, and the League of Arab States and its specialized committees to take measures to achieve sustainable development, and in particular to provide support to the energy, water and environmental sectors on climate change issues and in promoting regional institutional frameworks for sustainable development.

Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field (resolution 306 (XXVII))

9. The Commission emphasized the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and recognized the importance of the joint initiative of the Commission and the League of Arab States concerning the Arab Dialogue on Internet Governance, and its two strategic outputs, which were adopted by the Arab Telecommunications and Information Council of Ministers at its fifteenth session. It noted the outcomes of the conference and public consultations to establish the Arab Internet Governance Forum, held in Beirut, on 31 January and 1 February 2012, which stressed the need for an Arab Internet Governance Forum and set the scene for launching the multi-stakeholder process of establishing the Forum, and in this context, encouraged Governments of member countries of the Commission to actively participate in the process of establishing the Arab Internet Governance Forum in coordination with the League of Arab States. The Commission requested the secretariat to facilitate the establishment of the Forum in partnership with the League of Arab States and in cooperation with the relevant international and regional organizations and other regional commissions of the United Nations; and to support policies and directions concerning the implementation of the subprogrammes of the Arab Regional Road Map for Internet Governance under the umbrella of the Forum process and to support efforts for the acquisition of Arabic top-level domains.

Support for the Palestinian people (resolution 307 (XXVII))

10. The Commission took note of the note by the Secretary-General, transmitting the report prepared by the Commission, on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/66/78-E/2011/13), and noted with appreciation the efforts of the secretariat to support the Palestinian people, build their institutions and raise awareness of Palestinian rights as guaranteed by numerous international resolutions, charters and conventions.

11. The Commission welcomed Palestine's full membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and called upon member States to raise the level of their support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain

their full rights and establish an independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations, support Palestine's efforts to obtain full membership in international forums, organizations and bodies, and redouble efforts and support to reinforce the resilience of the Palestinian people and ensure their continued existence on their land. The Commission requested the secretariat to continue to support the Palestinian people and their institutions in accordance with the priorities and needs defined by that people and their institutions, in a number of ways.

The regional dimension of development (resolution 308 (XXVII))

12. The Commission recognized that the regional dimension of development is critical for an effective and coordinated response to an ever-growing number of transboundary issues, and emphasized the importance of the measures taken at the regional level, as they provide the critical link between the global and national levels, especially in the context of the ongoing discussions on an integrated approach to sustainable development and the development agenda beyond 2015. It stressed the important role played by the regional commissions as part of the institutional landscape in each region through norm-setting, dissemination and analytical functions, and as important forums for articulating regional perspectives on global issues and building consensus within each region. The Commission welcomed the recommendations of the independent study, sponsored by the regional commissions, entitled "The regional dimension of development and the United Nations system",[1] and invited the United Nations system organizations working at the global and regional levels to support the implementation of its recommendations.

13. The Commission requested the secretariat, working through the Regional Coordination Mechanism, and in consultation with other regional and subregional organizations, to ensure implementation of the recommendations so that the engagement of the United Nations system with regional and subregional organizations is coherent and strategically coordinated and fits into a larger comprehensive strategy in support of regional integration efforts.

Adoption of the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 (resolution 309 (XXVII))

14. The Commission noted that the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 were justified in order to give it sufficient flexibility in addressing current changes and emerging developments and adopted the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.

Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 (resolution 310 (XXVII))

15. The Commission considered the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015, noted that the draft strategic framework was based on the economic and social development priorities of member countries, adopted the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 and requested the secretariat to distribute the strategic framework in the form adopted by member countries.

[1] Available from: www.un.org/regionalcommissions/PrintRegionalDimensionStudy.pdf.

Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (resolution 311 (XXVII))

16. The Commission affirmed the importance of the role played by its subsidiary bodies in designing, coordinating and following up on the work of the Commission in their respective domains and for upholding the best interests of member countries, and recognized the importance of implementing the recommendations made by those bodies to enable the Commission to undertake its duties in the competencies falling within the remit of its subsidiary bodies. The Commission considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions held in the period between the twenty-sixth and the twenty-seventh sessions of the Commission and adopted the recommendations contained in those reports, and called upon member countries to cooperate with the Commission in initiating and implementing measures to ensure that those recommendations are put into effect.

Evaluation of the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (resolution 312 (XXVII))

17. The Commission recognized the need to fully implement General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 22 December 2004 concerning the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which it recognized the need to optimize the linking of evaluation to performance in the achievement of development goals, and took note with satisfaction of the report on the evaluation of the work of the Commission presented to it at its twenty-seventh session. The Commission recognized that its evaluation policy is in line with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8), endorsed the recommendations contained in the report on the evaluation of the work of the Commission and called upon the Executive Secretary to continue efforts to improve the performance of the secretariat through, inter alia, evaluation of the work of the secretariat and review of its internal structure to achieve the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency.

Frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the countries of the region (resolution 313 (XXVII))

18. The Commission recalled its resolutions 214 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 and 219 (XX) of 27 May 1999 concerning the frequency of sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission and the establishment of a technical committee on the liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization in the countries of the Western Asia region. In view of the role of foreign trade and financing for development in promoting economic growth and strengthening regional integration, the Commission decided that the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development should hold its sessions annually, taking effect in 2013.

B. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

19. At its sixty-eighth session, held in Bangkok from 17 to 23 May 2012, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted a number of resolutions, which are hereinunder brought to the attention of the Council.

Reaffirming the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a focus on the Pacific (resolution 68/1)

20. The Commission recognized that Pacific small island developing States share the same vulnerabilities as those of other small island developing States and are economically and ecologically fragile and vulnerable, while their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets place them at a disadvantage economically and prevent economies of scale; and reaffirmed the special case and the unique and particular vulnerabilities of Pacific small island developing States in relation to sustainable development.

21. The Commission invited members and associate members to recognize the importance of the oceans and the sustainable development of ocean resources to Pacific small island developing States, including the need for the conservation and sustainable management of the Pacific Ocean and coastal environments, and to support efforts for the sustainable management, conservation and use of ocean resources. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to support capacity development and capacity supplementation for Pacific small island developing States to pursue sustainable development; and to improve access to finance and promote and support voluntary technology transfer in this regard.

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific region (resolution 68/2)

22. The Commission emphasized the need for continued international support and the mobilization of technical and financial resources in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable the least developed countries to graduate from least developed country status in the stipulated time, and noted the need to further intensify the engagement of the international community in the attainment of the goals and targets agreed in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020[2] (Istanbul Programme of Action), including the mobilization of additional international support measures and action in favour of the least developed countries and the formation of a renewed partnership between those countries and their development partners.

23. The Commission urged the countries of the region and international and regional organizations to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action and the Regional Road Map for Implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action in the Asian and Pacific Region from 2011 to 2020 (see E/ESCAP/68/23), and in this regard, requested the Executive Secretary to assist the least developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region in implementing the Regional Road Map and in achieving the internationally agreed development goals.

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[2] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.II.A.1), chap. II.

Enabling paperless trade and the cross-border recognition of electronic data and documents for inclusive and sustainable intraregional trade facilitation (resolution 68/3)

24. The Commission noted that the trade and supply-chain security initiatives under implementation in major export markets will make it increasingly necessary for all actors in the international supply chain to exchange data and documents electronically and emphasized the need to enable the cross-border use and recognition of electronic trade data and documents, and the need for all countries to adopt single-window approaches and mutual recognition of documents, as part of efforts to facilitate exports from the least developed and landlocked developing countries. The Commission encouraged members and associate members to support and participate in the knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific; to initiate or accelerate the implementation of national paperless trade systems; to take into account and, whenever possible, adopt available international standards developed by relevant United Nations bodies; to participate in the development of new international standards; and to consider entering into bilateral and subregional agreements on the cross-border recognition and exchange of trade-related documents as building blocks towards regional and global cross-border paperless trade.

25. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to support and facilitate the process for the development of regional arrangements on the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade and to ensure that the regional arrangements take into account and are consistent with the existing international and regional agreements, mechanisms and undertakings, and that they also build on existing international standards and conventions. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to continue and further strengthen the secretariat's support for capacity-building activities related to trade facilitation and paperless trade.

Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport (resolution 68/4)

26. The Commission endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme and Strategic Framework, and to carry out in 2016 an evaluation of the implementation of phase II of the Programme and submit a report with recommendations to the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session.

Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017 (resolution 68/5)

27. The Commission took note of the contributions of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response

(UN-SPIDER) to the provision, for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, of all types of space-based information and services relevant to disaster management, and recognized the contributions made by the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific as an important initiative of the Commission in promoting regional cooperation in space applications, in particular through its education and training network. The Commission proclaimed the period from 2012 to 2017 the Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, and decided that the objective of the Asia-Pacific Years of Action should be to enhance efforts at the national and regional levels to broaden and deepen the contribution of space technology and the Geographic Information System to addressing issues related to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management as well as environment and development by increasing relevant activities at the national, subregional and regional levels.

28. The Commission invited member States to make use of programmes offered by the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific for capacity-building in space technologies and the Geographic Information System, and called for continued support to activities under the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in promoting space technology applications. The Commission invited member States to carry out activities relevant to the Asia-Pacific Years of Action, and requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the organization of activities associated with the Asia-Pacific Years of Action in collaboration with other regional initiatives.

Asia-Pacific regional preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 (resolution 68/6)

29. The Commission took note of the proposed regional preparatory activities to be undertaken by the secretariat in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund to support members and associate members in preparing for the special session of the General Assembly and was mindful of the significant linkage between the International Conference on Population and Development and the Asian and Pacific Population Conference and the need to align the convening of the forthcoming sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference with the global process leading up to the special session in order to achieve synergies and impact. In this context, the Commission decided to postpone the convening of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, to be held in Bangkok, to 2013, with a view to utilizing the Conference as an intergovernmental platform for regional preparations for the special session of the Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, and in order for the outcome document of the Conference to serve as a regional input to the special session.

30. The Commission emphasized the need for all members and associate members to recommit themselves to fully implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[3] and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a regional overview on the basis of the national reviews of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action

[3] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

and the constraints faced therein for the consideration of the sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 (resolution 68/7)

31. The Commission recognized the positive impact of previous regional decades in increasing national action on the rights of persons with disabilities, while noting that many challenges remain, and emphasized the importance of a participatory, comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach in order to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[4] effectively, especially with the active and meaningful involvement of persons with disabilities. The Commission reaffirmed the significance of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea, in Incheon, from 29 October to 2 November 2012.

32. In this regard, the Commission proclaimed the period from 2013 to 2022 the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, with a view to addressing both remaining and emerging challenges, promoting, protecting and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, increasing ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. It invited all members and associate members of the Commission, international development assistance agencies and the private sector to ensure the successful implementation of the Decade and requested the Executive Secretary to support members and associate members upon request, including through capacity-building and technical assistance, in developing and pursuing national programmes and international cooperation during the forthcoming Decade.

Enhancing coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with regional organizations for promoting regional development (resolution 68/8)

33. The Commission recognized that the regional dimension of development is critical for an effective and coordinated response to an ever-growing number of regional and global issues, and emphasized the importance of activities at the regional and subregional levels as an essential building block of effective global governance. It stressed the significant role played by the regional commissions as part of the institutional landscape in each region, and recognized the importance of regional coordination mechanisms in promoting enhanced regional cooperation among agencies of the United Nations system and working together towards enhanced policy coherence, programme effectiveness and efficiency.

34. The Commission took note of the independent study, sponsored by the regional commissions, entitled "The regional dimension of development and the United Nations system",[1] commended the Executive Secretary and the executive secretaries of the other regional commissions for sponsoring the independent study and called for the dissemination of the findings and recommendations of the study to the members and associate members of the Commission. The Commission invited agencies of the United Nations, as appropriate, to work together in support of the implementation of the recommendations of the independent study on regionalism as

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

a building block for multilateralism and on the need for a coherent regional strategy for development, and requested the Executive Secretary to work, through the Regional Coordination Mechanism for the Asia-Pacific region and in consultation with member States and other relevant organizations operating in Asia and the Pacific at the regional and subregional levels, towards the implementation of the recommendations of the study, so that the engagement of the United Nations system with such organizations is coherent, strategically coordinated and geared to support regional integration efforts.

Terms of reference of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (resolution 68/9)

35. The Commission took note of the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission and adopted the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee as annexed to the resolution.

Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific (resolution 68/10)

36. The Commission noted the theme study for the sixty-eighth session, entitled "Growing together: economic integration for an inclusive and sustainable Asia-Pacific century"[5] and recognized that rapid economic growth in Asia and the Pacific is opening up significant opportunities for trade, investment and employment and has the potential to facilitate substantive progress in reducing poverty and closing development gaps across countries in the region. It emphasized the need for closer regional cooperation, which could make the region more resilient to future crises and that, in the wake of the global financial crisis, regional economic integration could play a critical role in driving the Asian and Pacific region's march towards an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future.

37. The Commission called upon all members and associate members to strengthen the role of the Commission in enhancing regional economic integration and cooperation, including in all subregions of Asia and the Pacific, and decided to convene the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the First Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation. It requested the Executive Secretary to strengthen the role and capacity of the secretariat in the area of regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region and to support the convening of the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013.

Connectivity for energy security (resolution 68/11)

38. The Commission took note of the Secretary-General's initiative "Sustainable Energy for All" and recalled General Assembly resolution 65/151 of 20 December 2010, in which the Assembly decided to declare 2012 the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. It recognized the need to optimize the use of energy resources by analysing the potential to address that need with a view to establishing and developing a more stable and efficient energy production and consumption system that contributes towards sustainable development and enhanced energy security.

[5] Available from: www.unescap.org/pdd/publications/themestudy2012/themestudy2012-full.pdf.

39. The Commission welcomed the ongoing efforts of Governments to promote subregional and regional cooperation on the interconnection of energy transmission systems, and in this context requested the Executive Secretary to identify options, in consultation with member States, related to regional energy connectivity, including an intergovernmental framework that could be developed for an integrated regional power grid, which could be referred to as the "Asian Energy Highway"; to analyse the socioeconomic and environmental benefits of each option as well as the challenges and opportunities towards the realization of each option; and to report on each option to the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, to be held in the Russian Federation, in May 2013.